

TITLE

SABBATH SCHOOL VISITANT.

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SABBATH SCHOOL GOVERNMENT.

We have been requested by a number of our patrons, to give a system of directions concerning the management of Sabbath Schools. This request is gratefully received, and it will give us pleasure to answer it to the best of our ability. But in the first place, we would remark, that no system can be given, which, in every particular, may, with propriety, be made universal in its application. The state of the school,—its numbers and prosperity,—the disposition and engagedness of the Teachers, and the public feeling towards the institution,—must all be taken into view, and a system of government formed accordingly. We will, however, lay down some general directions, the utility of which we have proved by experience, and point out some of the errors, which we have in like manner detected.

Perhaps one of the greatest errors in infant schools, has been, in the too great number of their officers. A school burdened with these, can seldom flourish. Directors, for instance, although in large towns and societies, highly useful, are, in country S. Schools, for the most part, only an encumbrance, unless, perhaps, chosen as mere honorary officers, to grace the institution, and give it respectability. Nor are Visiting Committees much more useful. Not being, generally, engaged in the school themselves, they take a less lively interest in its welfare than the teachers do, and, therefore, what is depending on them, is too often left undone. The teachers themselves are therefore, the best visitors. They should often visit the parents of their pupils, and in this manner they may gain their confidence, and ensure their co-operation. Any if, at any time, it is thought proper, (as it ought often to be,) to visit all the society, for the purpose of procuring scholars, and enlarging the school, let a committee be appointed expressly for the occasion, of those whose hearts are warmly interested, and who will engage in the work, with zeal and fidelity.

Another error, and a great one too, is the discontinuance of the school during the winter months. A S. School will never flourish, unless its officers have energy to conduct it, even against heavy discouragements, through the gloomiest seasons of the year. If, in the winter, there are only scholars enough for one teacher, let, if you please, only one attend; but on no account discontinue the school, if you would see it advancing in prosperity.

Another error, and a very common one in every school, and in every department of business, is, the want of order, and system. It matters not how good the general regulations may be, or how ardent and persevering the officers and teachers, unless the business of the school is reduced to order, and regulated by system, all will be con-

fusion,—the exercises will be tedious,—and little good will be effected. A measure, once adopted, should also be pursued with a steady, persevering vigor, until it is abandoned, or it will fail of success.

The Officers of a Sunday School, may be divided into external and internal. The former should be chosen by the *Society*, the latter by the *School*. The external officers should consist of a President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary. The internal, of a Superintendent, and one or two Assistants. Respecting the duties of the former, it is presumed, little need be said. They should have no concern, officially, in the internal government of the school. The President should preside over the *Society*, and preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. He should be a man of respectability and influence, and one who is willing to devote himself with ardor to the cause.

But the most efficient officer in the society, or rather in the school, should be the Superintendent. No one can know as well as he, what may be wanting,—what alteration may be necessary, or what improvement useful; and if, before he can adopt any measure, he must consult his superiors in office, and convince them of its utility, his enterprize will be greatly damped,—he will feel himself less responsible for the charge with which he is but so partially entrusted,—useful experiments will be seldom tried,—and the measures which are adopted, will be executed with less efficiency. The Superintendent should, therefore, in company with his Assistants, have the entire management of the internal concerns of the school. He should class the scholars, and appoint the teachers; keep minutes of the transactions of the school, and report the same at the stated meetings of the society; see that the rules and by-laws are particularly observed; and make such alterations and improvements, from time to time, as, in his judgment, shall seem conducive to the best interests of the institution.

[The subject will be continued in future numbers.]

UTICA UNION SABBATH SCHOOL.

THE evening of the second Monday in every month, is an interesting season to the Teachers and Officers of this Institution. It is then they meet together, for their mutual encouragement and edification, and to unite their prayers to the throne of mercy, in behalf of themselves and the dear objects of their care.

At the last meeting that was held, a Superintendent remarked upon the importance of those who would teach Christ Jesus, being themselves taught of him. For, otherwise, said he, how can they speak to the children of his preciousness?—how can they persuade them to love him? He was then asked, if he viewed piety as a qualification absolutely indispensable in a Teacher. To which he replied, that, as our great object was, or should be, to impress upon our pupils the solemnities of immortality, and to lead them in the paths of piety, he could not see how any one could venture to take upon himself the responsibility, who was conscious of being a stranger to religion.

A Teacher then rose, and observed, that it was usually his happiness to agree in sentiment with his Superintendent ; but on this subject, he would beg leave decidedly to differ from him. In our school are engaged a number of Teachers who are not pious ; and when we professors compare ourselves with some of them,—with their zeal and earnestness in the cause,—we have reason to blush and be ashamed for our stupidity. They instruct their pupils in the important truths of holy writ ;—they, no doubt, feel solicitous for their salvation : and the Lord can as well sanctify their labors, as those of the most devoted Christian. Not only this,—they are benefitted themselves. The truths of the bible they *must* dwell upon : conviction will fasten upon their consciences : the Lord often finds them in the way, and draws them to himself.

Another Teacher then mentioned the interesting fact, that if ever he had experienced divine grace, he was indebted for it, under God, to this institution. When he entered the school as a Teacher, he was far from righteousness ; but the Lord, he trusted, had made it a means of his salvation. On this, a reverend clergyman remarked, that if any one had reason to be more devoted to the cause, than another, it was one who was born there.

The Superintendent, who spoke first, then remarked, that he was glad this subject had come before the meeting. He had often thought upon it with deep anxiety. He would by no means be understood, to exclude those Teachers who were not pious ; yet the objections which he had made, were such as had often arisen in his mind, and he had presented them, only that they might be answered.

The question was then asked, whether it was ever known, that the Lord had, in a special manner, blessed the labors of an unconverted Teacher. In reply to which, it was observed by the Teacher who first spoke, that, although he had not sufficient information on the subject, to give particular instances, yet, for his own part, he had no doubt, that not only many Sabbath School Teachers, but even many ministers of the gospel, whose labors in the cause of Christ have been gloriously successful, will, at the last day, be found numbered with those, to whom the Lord will say, “I never knew you—Depart, ye cursed.” [An aged minister present, and the Vice-President of the Society, each confirmed this fact, by his own observation.] The Teacher proceeded :—What reason can we have for prohibiting any one’s engaging in any sphere of usefulness ? By the same principle that you exclude them from the Sabbath School, you might prohibit their performing almost any benevolent duty. You might forbid them to visit the forsaken, to relieve the needy, to comfort the afflicted, or console the dying,—because they do it not in the fear of God. You might even close the Lord’s treasury against their charities, and utterly exclude them from his holy sanctuary. You might forbid them to admonish the workers of iniquity, or to bring up their children in the ways of piety. You might, in one word, shut them out from every means of grace—from every sphere of usefulness ! Are we prepared—are we willing to do this ?—Surely we are not. Let us then open our doors,—yea, and our hearts also,—to receive as fellow-laborers in this glorious cause, all whose sincere desire it is, to be in the way of religion—to be devoted to benevolence.

SABBATH SCHOOL MONTHLY CONCERT.

It is believed, that Sabbath Schools are beginning, in some measure, to receive that attention which their importance demands. Their number is increasing ; their friends are more zealous and systematic in their operations ; books are published and publishing, more adapted to their general purpose :—in short, there is in their favor, a combined influence of wisdom, piety and talent, which gives them a character, demonstrates their utility, and predicts, with certainty, their final success.

But the road to improvement is always open. New inventions are daily appearing, to facilitate the progress of agriculture and manufactures ; and why should the Christian philanthropist be forbidden to improve, if possible, his plans for doing good.

Among the institutions of the day, Sabbath Schools rank, in importance, next to Missions. Now there is a "MONTHLY CONCERT" for the latter, but none for the former. And why should there not be ? Will it be said, that the "Monthly Concert" which we now have, was designed to embrace *particularly* all charitable associations ? Such was not its original design. It was instituted with an express reference to Missions, and it is hoped that it will be restricted to that object. Will it be said, that Sabbath School Teachers are now generally in the habit of meeting once a month for prayer and conversation on those subjects which lie near their hearts ? This is true, but would it not be better to meet, at *one particular time* in a CONCERT OF PRAISE FOR SABBATH SCHOOLS, with all our fellow laborers throughout the Christian world ? There is something delightful in the thought ; and the benefits arising from such a measure, need only be mentioned to be seen. The mere consideration, that ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND Teachers, in every part of the Christian world, together with many other friends to the institution, are assembled at a particular hour, to lift up their joint desires to God, for a blessing to rest upon them and the children of their care, would animate, and strengthen, and give life and ardor to all the faithful. And what blessing might they not expect ? Would not a God of love look down from heaven, and hear and answer their supplications, by giving them more union of spirit,—more grace and strength to discharge their duty,—and by crowning their labors with greater success.

While the writer believes in the practicability and importance of the measure, he cannot close these remarks, without venturing to mention, *The second Monday in every Month* ; and this he does, not with the least intention of dictating to those who are wise in projecting schemes of utility to the world, but merely to draw the attention of Sabbath School Teachers to the subject ; and he hopes that the Editors of the American Sabbath School Teacher's Magazine, and of the American Sunday School Union Magazine, and Editors of other religious publications, will give it a more full discussion in their respective papers.

We find in the S. School Teacher's Magazine, a beautiful system of juvenile instruction ; from which we make the following extract :

QUESTIONS FOR SMALL SUNDAY SCHOOL CHILDREN.

Did Jesus Christ die to save us?—Don't you want to hear something about him—how he died?—But first I must tell you, that every body in the whole world was so bad, that God said they must die, and after that be miserable forever; for when God tells them in the Bible, they must not swear, they will swear, and say bad words; when he tells them they must pray to him, and love him, they won't pray to him nor care any thing for him. So God looked down from heaven, to see if there were any that minded him, and all were bad; there was no body good, for we are thinking bad, and doing bad, and talking bad, all the time, and people who do so, must be punished, and can't go with God, who is so good and holy.—But then who was so good as to pity us and feel sorry to see us all going to destruction?—God himself; though we behave so bad to him; when you learn to read the Bible, you can read all about it, how much God loved us when we hated him.—And when God was so sorry for us, what did he say he would do to save us and make us good that we might go to heaven and live with him?—He sent his own Son to die instead of us, as I told you before.—What is the name of this Son of God?—And now I am going to tell you all that our Lord Jesus Christ did for us wicked sinners, and if you will not listen to me, and keep still, and think about what I am telling you, I must stop and not talk to you any more, for I cannot dare to talk of God and Jesus Christ to children who are playing and will not mind me; and when I tell you all that he did, you must try to think “Jesus Christ did it because I am so bad, and I won't be a bad child any more, but I will love him and pray to him to make me good.”—Will you do so?—First, Jesus Christ came into the world a little baby, and his mother was poor, and he was born in a stable, and instead of a nice warm cradle, as other little babies have, he was laid on straw in a manger; you know what a manger is; and then he was so good that he minded all that was said to him, though he need not have minded, for he was God; remember always that Jesus Christ is God, the great and high God; dont forget that. But he was a man too, and he kept all God's laws, and never once did any thing bad. Oh! he was so good as nobody ever was besides him in this world, and as soon as he was grown up a man, he went about doing good, and he cured all the sick people, and he made blind people see, and deaf people hear, and lame people walk, and he cared for the poor, and the sick, and told them all about God, and prayed for them, and talked to them, and many times he would go all day hungry, just to talk to the people, and do them good.—When any body is talking about God and the Lord Jesus Christ, should not children be still and think about it?—What should they think when they hear all that Jesus did?—Did you think so when I was telling you about him?—Oh! think how much he did for you, and yet you won't just think about him one little minute.—And now I shall ask you something about what I have told you, to see if you attended to me: Was our Lord a little baby when he came down from heaven to save us and make us good? Was his mother rich? Was he born in a house? Had he a nice warm cradle as other babies have? What was he lain in? Can you repeat the little verse in the hymn, beginning “Soft and easy is thy cradle?” Did he ever do any thing that was bad? Is Jesus Christ God? Was every body as good as he? When he was grown up a man, what did he do? What did he do for the blind people? And what for the lame people? What for the sick and poor people? Did he pray for any of them or talk to them? And now if you want to be like him you must help sick people and poor people too.



It was a happy saying of QUINTILLIAN, “that a child's mind is like a vessel with a narrow neck, in which no water will enter, if poured abundantly into it; whereas, it fills insensibly, if the liquid be poured gently, or even by drops.”

“Speak little to them,” says another, “and make them speak a great deal,” is a useful maxim, if judiciously applied.

PHILADELPHIA SUNDAY AND ADULT SCHOOL UNION.

WE have just received the *seventh* report of this institution, as read at their annual meeting in May last : by which it appears there are now in connexion with the Union, 723 schools, 7,337 teachers, and 48,681 scholars ! This Union extends to *seventeen of the states*. They have employed, during the past year, two S. School missionaries, and printed 210,500 books, tracts, and papers, for the use of S. Schools. They have now, with some other societies, resolved themselves into the AMERICAN SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION. Their object in thus forming a National Institution, is, to combine the efforts of S. School Societies, and disseminate useful information on this interesting subject. Any S. School in America, may become auxiliary to this, and be entitled to its privileges, by paying three dollars, sending a copy of their constitution, and list of officers, and their annual report. The *N. Y. Female Union* have united with them. Would it not be well for the UTICA UNION to join them ?



THE GOVERNMENT OF CHILDREN, is a science of not easy attainment. It requires much discretion, and knowledge of human nature. It may, however, be attained, in no small degree, by the humblest Teacher, and is perhaps as often understood, by those of ordinary capacity, as by those of the greatest. The following anecdote, taken from the S. School Teacher's Magazine, happily exemplifies the utility of wise and judicious discipline :—

Two boys had broken the rules of the school : they continued obstinate : the superintendent detained them after school was dismissed ; pointed out the guilt of their conduct ; spoke affectionately of his tender concern for them, and of its being his duty to punish them. This had no effect, but rather to increase their obstinacy. He then told them of his grief in having to punish them, and of their dear mother's grief, when she would hear of it. He spoke in the most affectionate manner, but the boys still remained unmoved. He had expected the mention of their mother would have touched their feelings, " and now," say the superintendent, " there remained but one resource—to forgive. Had I punished them, I might have acted justly towards them ; but would that have carried any conviction to their minds ? They thought of nothing but the punishment they were to receive, and perhaps were determined in their own minds, if they were punished this time, they would play the truant so as not to be in danger a second time ; therefore, taking them each by the hand, I said, slowly and emphatically, " I forgive you both, and if you are sorry, and do so no more, may God forgive you, and your mother and I will be so happy." These words were so unexpected, they acted like an electric shock. When I had taken their hands, they had shrunk back and exerted themselves to release their hands, but when they heard the word *forgive*, the blood that anger had called, flew from their cheeks, and they both burst into tears : it was a triumph of mild and temperate discipline ; it was even more than I expected ; I was now assured they were truly punished, for they felt a deeper wound than the marks of the rod, and more lasting in its effects ; they wept, and their tears were those of soul-felt penitence."

A WORD TO S. S. TEACHERS.—Teach your pupils, first of all, those things which are essential to their salvation. These,—thanks to the Father of goodness,—are within the limits of the meanest capacity. The little child, as well as the aged philosopher, can understand them. As says the elegant author of "*Prose by a Poet*," "With the naked eye, if that eye be single, the humblest human being may discern 'the narrow way that leadeth unto life ;' but it required the soul and sagacity of a NEWTON, to unravel the many-colored woof of the rainbow, and discern the cause why the leaf detached from the tree falls to the ground :—so infinitely more simple are 'the things that belong to our peace,' than those secrets, however sublime and interesting in themselves, which only add to our information, without purifying our hearts."

SABBATH SCHOOL ANECDOTES.—*For the Visitant.*

THERE are many Teachers who encourage their pupils to ask questions on the verses they recite, and on the various subjects in which they are interested: this is well: and we would recommend this course to all who are engaged in teaching; yet teachers are apt to answer these questions in a hasty manner, and with little or no reflection. They seem to think, that as they are teaching *children*, it is not of so much consequence, that their answers should be *correct*, if they only satisfy the inquirer.

A scholar was rehearsing the following passage: "No murderer hath eternal life abiding in him ;" and wishing to understand its meaning, he asked his teacher, "If any person would go to heaven, that killed himself." His teacher told him, that we had *no* evidence from the scriptures, to believe he would. The little boy looking up with deep concern to his teacher, replied, "What then became of Sampson?"

Another teacher was instructing his class on Bible history, and in speaking of the flood, he said, that every thing, except what Noah took into the Ark, was drowned. One of the scholars asked him if "every thing was drowned," and when his teacher replied in the affirmative, he asked, "were the fishes drowned?"

INTERESTING CATECHISING.—AT an anniversary meeting of the London Sunday School Union, the Rev. S. Kilpin remarked, that in catechising some children on the subject "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," the following were the questions and answers. What is to be done? The will of God. Where is it to be done? On earth. How is it to be done? As it is in heaven. How do you think the angels do the will of God in heaven, as they are our pattern? The first child replied, "they do it immediately." The second, "they do it actively." The third, "they do it constantly." The fourth, "they do it ardently." The fifth, "they do it unitedly." Here a pause ensued, and no other child appeared to have any answer, but, after some time, a little girl arose and said, "Why, sir, they do it without asking any questions."

COLONEL ETHAN ALLEN was a bold officer in the American Revolution. He could face the enemies of his country with the most undaunted bravery, and in the field of battle, he never shrunk from danger. But he was an opposer to Christianity, and gloried in the character of an Infidel. His wife, however, was a pious woman, and taught her children in the ways of piety, while he told them it was all a delusion. But there was an hour coming, when Colonel Allen's confidence in his own sentiments would be closely tried. A beloved daughter was taken sick—He received a message that she was dying—He hastened to her bedside, anxious to hear her dying words. “Father,” said she, “I am about to die: shall I believe in the principles which you have taught me, or shall I believe what my mother has taught me?” This was an affecting scene. The intrepid Colonel became extremely agitated; his chin quivered; his whole frame shook; and after waiting a few moments he replied, “Believe what your mother has taught you.”

SABBATH SCHOOLS, are beginning to excite a more lively interest in every part of the Christian world. Mankind are beginning more highly to appreciate their excellence. The institution is fast rising toward its meridian splendor. Where, fifteen years ago, a Sabbath School had not been heard of, we have now a NATIONAL UNION. Numerous publications are also appearing, devoted to the cause, and thousands contribute to support them. Some of these are exceedingly valuable; but the one which has as yet the justly merited pre-eminence over every other on this side the Atlantic, is the *American S. S. Teachers' Magazine* of N. York. The American Union, also, we are happy to add, are about publishing a similar work in Philadelphia. We wish them great success, but notwithstanding our high expectations, can only hope, that, in point of merit, they may equal their New-York sister.

>We have received several communications from unknown correspondents, and we are glad they are unknown; for we are on this account the better enabled to conduct the *VISITANT* with independence, without giving personal offence to any of our friends. None of the communications received, appear to have in view the *object* of the *Visitant*; and one of them is attacking, in a manner entirely unsuited to promote reform, what he supposes to be popular errors and vices. Some people are apt to think, that whatever is interesting to themselves, must be so to others: but an Editor should be governed by a different standard; and among the variety of communications which he is continually receiving, it is his province to decide, in the coolness of his own unbiassed judgment, whether any or all of them may, with propriety, be given to the public, as his best selections. Communications on the subject of *Sabbath Schools*, will be gratefully attended to.

[For want of room in the *VISITANT*, we have inserted some articles on the cover.]